C1 cont'd

the intermediate table comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures; and

a gas bearing generator constructed and arranged to generate a gas bearing between said major surface and a substrate located thereon.

C2

4. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said gas bearing has a thickness less than 150 μm.

C3

10. (Twice Amended) A device manufacturing method comprising:

(a) providing a mask table with a mask which contains a pattern,

(b) providing a substrate table with a substrate which is at least partially covered by a layer of radiation-sensitive material,

(c) prior to (b), providing the substrate to an intermediate table comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures, and maintaining the substrate for a given time interval upon a gas bearing generated between the major surface and the substrate; and

(d) using a projection beam of radiation to project an irradiated part of the mask onto a target area of the layer of radiation-sensitive material.

See the attached Appendix for the changes made to effect the above claim(s)

Please add claims 15-30 as follow:

C4

15. (New) A substrate preparing device comprising:

an intermediate table on which a substrate can be positioned before transfer to a substrate table in a lithographic projection apparatus, the intermediate table comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures;

a gas bearing generator constructed and arranged to generate a gas bearing between said major surface and a substrate located thereon; and

a temperature controller constructed and arranged to regulate a temperature of at least one of the intermediate table and the temperature of the gas.

16. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 15, further comprising:

a gas ionizer constructed and arranged to ionize said gas bearing.

17. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 15, further comprising:

a position detector constructed and arranged to detect a first position of said substrate on said intermediate table;

a displacement calculator constructed and arranged to calculate a required displacement between said first position and a desired position of the substrate on the intermediate table; and

an actuator constructed and arranged to move said substrate from said first position to said desired position.

C1 cont'd

18. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 15, wherein said gas bearing generator comprises:

a gas source arranged to deliver gas through said plurality of apertures to generate the gas bearing; and

an evacuation pump arranged to evacuate the gas from the gas bearing.

19. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 15, wherein said substrate preparing device is a part of a resist processing apparatus.

20. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 12,

wherein said intermediate table further comprises a first temperature controller constructed and arranged to regulate a temperature of the intermediate table.

21. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 20,

wherein said first temperature controller maintains the intermediate table and the gas bearing at a temperature substantially equal to a temperature of the substrate table.

22. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 12,

wherein said intermediate table further comprises a second temperature controller constructed and arranged to regulate a temperature of said gas bearing.

23. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 12, further comprising:

a position detector constructed and arranged to detect a first position of said substrate on said intermediate table;

a displacement calculator constructed and arranged to calculate a required displacement between said first position and a desired position of the substrate on the intermediate table; and

an actuator constructed and arranged to move said substrate from said first position to said desired position.

24. (New) A substrate preparing device according to claim 12, wherein said substrate preparing device is a part of a resist processing apparatus.

C4 contd

25. (New) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

ionizing said gas bearing with a gas ionizer.

26. (New) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

regulating a temperature of said intermediate table with a first temperature controller.

27. (New) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

regulating a temperature of said gas bearing with a second temperature controller.

28. (New) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

maintaining said intermediate table and the gas bearing at a temperature substantially equal to a temperature of the substrate table.

29. (New) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

detecting a first position of said substrate on said intermediate table;

calculating a required displacement between said first position and a desired position of the substrate on the intermediate table; and

moving said substrate from said first position to said desired position.